Glacier Ranger Station
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
Washington State Route 542
Glacier
Whatcom County
Washington

HABS No. WA-192

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
GLACIER RANGER STATION

HABS No. WA-192

HABS
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37-GLAC,
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Location: Washington State Route 542
Glacier
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
Whatcom County
Washington

USGS Glacier, Wash. Quadrangle (7.5')
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:
10.578050.5415300

Present Owner: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest
21905-64th Ave. West
Mountlake Terrace, Washington 98043

Present Occupant: Same

Present Use: Public service (visitor) center

Significance: The Glacier Ranger Station is an element of a National Register thematic group entitled "USDA Forest Service Administrative Buildings in the States of Oregon and Washington, Built by the Civilian Conservation Corps." In common with other buildings in the group, the Station typifies construction projects undertaken by the C.C.C. and signifies the aid to the local community provided by the work relief program. The building is also an exceptional example of the rustic architectural style developed by the Pacific Northwest Region of the Forest Service to impart agency identity, and signifies the Service's particular expression of this early twentieth century American style (Sullivan 1979; Throop 1984).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:** 1938

2. **Architect:** "H. L." (as designated on construction drawings), USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, Portland.

3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The Glacier Ranger Station has been the property of the USDA, Forest Service, since its construction (USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N. F. Lands files). The site was withdrawn for administrative purposes in 1908. When the existing building was constructed in 1938, it was located within the Mt. Baker National Forest. The Mt. Baker National Forest was merged with the Snoqualmie National Forest to form the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie in 1974.

4. **Builder, contractor, supplier:** Civilian Conservation Corps, for USDA Forest Service.

5. **Original plans and construction:** "Office Building, Special" (USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Engineering files; see photos 17-21). This plan was evidently not available to Sullivan (1979), who stated "although the building does not follow them exactly, the plans for the station were from a series of standard building plans done during 1936 for the Forest Service and initialed L.A.F. [Linn A. Forest]."

   The plan shows a cruciform, one-story wood frame building with a poured concrete foundation and basement. The walls are masonry veneer and weatherboard. The roof consists of a main gable and hipped cross-gables, and is covered with cedar shakes. The main (north) facade is dominated by a portico with massive masonry columns. The interior includes a reception room, three offices, an employee restroom, and a basement under the reception room and general office. In addition, there are public restrooms at the east and west ends of the building, accessible from the exterior only. Curved masonry walls flank the building on the east and west sides. That on the west extends nearly to the shoulder of the Mt. Baker Highway (photos 3, 14).

   Construction was completed in 1938, at a cost of $2500 (USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N. F. Recreation files).

6. **Alterations and additions:** Shutters shown on the original plans were apparently never installed (photos 15, 16). A number of alterations have been made. Some time after 1958, the basement was converted to office space. The coal furnace was replaced with an oil-fired furnace. The crawl spaces under the side offices were excavated and concrete walls poured (USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N. F. Engineering files). The transverse counter which partitioned the lobby into a reception area and general office space was removed and replaced with a counter parallel to the west wall (photos 12, 17, 20) at an unknown date. The built-in shelves shown in the original plans (photo 21) were also removed, again at an unknown date.

B. **Historical Context:** The Glacier Ranger Station is located in the town of Glacier, Washington. It served as the administrative headquarters of the Glacier Ranger District from 1938 to 1984. The first Ranger Station in Glacier was constructed at the Gallop Administrative Site in 1907 (Field 1950: 9-10). When the Mt. Baker Highway (now State Route 542) was relocated through Glacier in 1931, the buildings at the Gallop site were in the right-of-way. They were not sufficiently sound to move, so a site for a new station was prepared at the present location. The office constructed in 1931 was replaced by the current building in 1938.

Construction of the existing Ranger Station was undertaken by the Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees of Camp Glacier (F-12). Framing, roofing and finishing was done by the C.C.C. "boys". Most of the masonry work was performed by a journeyman mason, one of the camp's Local Experienced Men (Sullivan 1979).

In 1984, the Glacier Ranger District and the Baker River Ranger District were merged to form the Mt. Baker Ranger District. Administrative headquarters were moved to Sedro-Woolley, and the Glacier Ranger Station was adapted to function as a visitor center, providing information and permits to recreationists using the North Fork Nooksack River, Heather Meadows Recreation Area and North Cascades National Park.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural character:** The Glacier Ranger Station is an exceptionally fine example of Forest Service rustic architecture as constructed by the Pacific Northwest Region. The Station possesses seven of the ten stylistic attributes identified by Throop (1983): native materials, varied exterior treatment, gabled and hipped gable roof shapes, multi-paned windows, covered entries, exterior chimneys and tree symbol decoration.

   Native materials were held to be most responsive and appropriate to the environment. In the Northwest, wood reflected local building traditions and the economy. Andesite masonry used at Glacier was quarried locally, reflecting natural materials and forms found elsewhere along the Mt. Baker Highway.

   Varied exterior treatment created visual interest through the application of materials differing in size, shape and finished surface. Aesthetics were enhanced by juxtaposing two or more contrasting textures. At Glacier, visual variety is created by the use of vertical and horizontal weatherboard, wood shingles, and masonry (photos 4, 6 & 7).

   Gable roofs had pitches appropriate to the Northwest environment. At Glacier, variety and visual interest are enhanced through the use of both gable and hipped gable shapes (photos 4, 6 & 7)

   In addition to their function in illumination and ventilation, multi-paned windows created visual interest by adding to the shapes and arrangements of exterior forms. At Glacier, variation in the type and placement of windows from one facade to the next adds interest to the building, while the regularity of the windows themselves prevents the result from appearing chaotic (photos 6, 11 & 18).

   Covered entries responded to the Northwest climate, and porches often sheltered main entries. At Glacier, the use of massive masonry columns gives the porch a monumental character (photo 5).

   Interior and exterior chimneys were common features, indicative of the prevalent use of wood and coal fuels. Chimney masonry at Glacier employs the andesite used elsewhere in the structure, reflecting colors and forms found in the local environment, and adds to the sense of substance conveyed by the massive portico (photo 6).

Tree symbol decoration was emblematic of the Forest Service and usually served as the only explicit ornamentation. At Glacier, this decoration was employed over the porch gable, and is complemented by the scrolled cut of the beam over the entrance porch (photos 5, 20).

2. Condition of fabric: The Station has been in continuous service since construction, and is in generally good condition owing to regular maintenance. Alterations include the removal of interior partitions and shelves.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The Glacier Ranger Station is cruciform in plan, 56 feet 1 inch along the front, and 44 feet 10 inches along the sides (photo 17). It is one story in height, with a full basement (created after 1929 - photo 17 shows a basement only under the reception room and general office).

2. Foundation: The foundation is poured concrete, with steel reinforcement at the corners. It is six inches thick, except under the public restrooms at the east and west ends, where it is ten inches thick. Approximately six inches is exposed above grade (photos 17, 19).

3. Walls: Twelve-inch horizontal weatherboard, ten inches to weather; on north, east and west arms of plan and under south gable. Ten-inch vertical boards under porch gable and on south arm. The exteriors of the reception room, employee restroom and public restrooms are andesite masonry veneer (photos 4-10).

4. Structural systems, framing: Platform frame of 2 by 4 inch studs, 16 inches on center. Floor of 2 by 10 inch joists, with 1 by 3 inch bridging, 16 inches on center. Roof of 2 by 6 inch rafters, 24 inches on center (photo 19).

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The anterior wall of the main (north) gable is recessed to form a porch, supported by two masonry posts of andesite; the porch platform is raised, open and surfaced with flagstone. It is three steps above grade. The area under the gable is covered with vertical boards with small triangular corner cuts. The area over the porch front is spanned by an 8 by 12 inch beam with a scroll cut on the bottom (photos 5, 18 & 21).

A shed-roof porch shelters the rear entry, located in the south wall at the southwest angle of the building. It is roofed with green fiberglass (photo 8). A bulkhead at the south end of the building accesses a coal chute (photo 7).

6. **Chimneys:** A massive andesite masonry exterior chimney rises on the east wall of the main gable (photo 6).

7. Openings:

   a. **Doorways and doors:** Center two-leaf French doors at main entry, under north gable (photo 5). Single-leaf sash door at rear entry. Single-leaf batten doors at public restrooms (photo 10).

   b. **Windows and shutters:** Eleven six-over-six double-hung sash windows, singly and in pairs. Window surrounds on east and west sides of main gable, front, are stone-framed with projecting stone slipsills. All six-over-six now have exterior storm windows in aluminum frames. Eight eight-light casement windows at corners at south end. Four six-light pivoting sash windows, two per public restroom (photos 4-9, 18). Five three-light pivoting sash windows in wells illuminate the basement; wells on front elevation possess radiating voussoirs (photo 11). The two basement windows on the south walls of the wings were installed when the basement was enlarged; they replace screened vents (photo 18).

8. Roof:

   a. **Shape, covering:** Main gable runs north-south. Hipped gable cross roof. Cedar shake covering, 31 inches in length, 10 inches to weather. Louvered vents at hip in cross-gables (photos 4, 18).

   b. **Cornice, eaves:** Open cornice, except at east and west ends, which have box cornices. No gutters shown on original plans. Wood gutters now present (photos 4-9, 19).

   c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** None.

C. Description of interior:

1. **Floor plan:** Reception room, general office, ranger office and one other office on ground floor, plus employee restroom, closets and vestibule at rear entry (photo 17). Reception room and general office are under main gable, and were originally separated by a

built-in counter. This was removed and replaced with a lateral counter parallel to the west wall. Ranger office and additional office are under cross-gables.

Public restrooms are at east and west ends, and are accessible only from the building exterior (photo 17). The basement reflects the partitioning of the major spaces on the first floor (omitting space under the restrooms).

2. **Stairways:** Open stair descending to basement from vestibule at rear entry (photo 17).

3. **Flooring:** One by four inch tongue-and-groove fir flooring, stained dark.

4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Dark-stained Douglas-fir paneling in lobby and east side room. Reception room is panelled with vertical random-width boards of 6, 8 and 10 inches. General office panelled with horizontal 1 by 10 and 1 by 12 inch boards to level of window sills, vertical random-width boards above (photos 12, 21).

   Side offices panelled with vertical random-width boards. Original panelling in west side office was removed and replaced with veneer panelling in the 1960's.

   Open ceiling over reception room exposes four king post trusses with triple struts. Dropped acoustical-tile ceiling in rear half of lobby and side offices (photos 12, 20). Lath-and-plaster walls in public restrooms.

5. Openings:

   a. **Doorways and doors:** Single-leaf panel doors between lobby and side offices, and in closets. Single-leaf sash door in interior of vestibule at rear entry (photo 17).

   b. **Windows:** Windows lack distinguishing interior trim.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** Scroll trim board over mantel echoes trim of beam over porch. Curved brackets on underside of trusses in reception room (photos 12, 20). Built-in cabinets and display cases shown on plans (photo 20) never constructed, or removed at unknown date. Back-lit window for display or transparencies replaces shelves and cases over fireplace.

7. **Hardware:** Full mortise hinges on all doors. Common round knobs on all interior and exterior doors except for main (French) doors, which have non-original lever handles.

8. **Mechanical equipment:**

   a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** Original coal furnace and ductwork removed in the late 1950's and replaced with oil-fired forced air furnace. No air conditioning, but all windows are operable.

   b. **Lighting:** Single incandescent light with frosted glass globe in reception room; fluorescent tubes above paneling on side walls; "egg crate" fluorescent fixtures in general office, below drop ceiling (photo 12). Nature of original lighting not known.

   c. **Plumbing:** Post-Depression plumbing fixtures in employee restroom. Original urinal, toilet and sink in men's public restroom; toilet and sink in women's.

   d. **Other equipment:** None.

9. **Original furnishings:** None.

D. **Site:**

1. **General setting:** The Glacier Ranger Station is located along Washington State Route 542, the Mt. Baker Highway, within the town of Glacier, Washington. When originally constructed, the Mt. Baker Highway was an all-weather gravel road. It is now a two-lane highway surfaced with asphalt (photos 1, 14 & 15).

   Glacier is an unincorporated town with a population of approximately 150. The Station was situated on the eastern edge of the town. The lot was and remains wooded.

   When originally constructed, the Station was divided into two major components - an office and residential area, and a service court (photo 14). A residence for the Protection Assistant was situated to the southwest of the office (photo 15; see "Outbuildings", below). The service court included a shop, truck storage, gas house and fire tool storage building. It was situated to the east of the office. The office was fronted on the north by a gravel parking lot situated directly on the highway, and on the east by the gravel drive

leading to the service court (photo 15). To the south was the drive leading to the Protection Assistant's residence, and to the west was forest land. A large Douglas-fir log was erected on an andesite masonry base to the east of the office (photos 1, 2 & 16; see "Outbuildings", below). The borders of the parking lot and drive were trimmed with columnar andesite, laid horizontally (photo 15). Plantings included native maples and Douglas-fir. There is no original planting plan extant.

The historic and architectural significance of the buildings in the service court has never been evaluated, and they are not included in the Glacier Ranger Station as currently listed on the National Register.

2. **Historic landscape design:** The historic landscape design was based on a desire to make the station easily accessible from the Mt. Baker Highway, to separate administrative and service functions, and to provide a nearby residence for reporting fires after normal business hours (to that end, the Protection Assistant's house was located next to the office).

3. Outbuildings: A house for the Protection Assistant occupied a site southwest of the office. This was originally a small wood-frame structure with a rectangular plan, later modified to an L-shaped plan (photo A-4). By the 1980's, the site was occupied by a much larger residence (Building 1092; photos A-1 to A-3). Forest Service files contain no information on whether the later structure was derived from additions to the original, or replaced it. In any case, the building has been determined ineligible for the National Register.

When the Ranger Station was first constructed, a large Douglas-fir log was placed on a masonry base just to the east of the office (photo 16). Rings on the log were labelled with well-known historical events, in order to give the public a sense of the age of this specimen of local old-growth timber. The original log deteriorated from exposure, and a much thinner section was placed on the base in the 1960's. This log remains today (photos 2, 13).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. **Architectural drawings:** USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Mt. Baker Ranger District, Sedro-Woolley, Engineering files.

B. **Historic views:** USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Supervisor's Office, Mountlake Terrace, Recreation files.

C. **Interviews:** None.

D. **Bibliography:**

1. **Primary and unpublished sources:**

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker Ranger District, Sedro-Woolley. Recreation files.

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Supervisor's Office, Mountlake Terrace. Lands files.

USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Supervisor's Office, Mountlake Terrace. Recreation files.

2. **Secondary and published sources:**

Field, Newton
1950 The Mt. Baker almanac: a book of historical facts and figures. Mt. Baker National Forest, Bellingham.

Sullivan, Michael
1979 Glacier Ranger Station. National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form. Photocopy of typescript. USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Recreation files, Mountlake Terrace.

Throop, E. Gail
1983 A characteristic expression: a thematic evaluation of Forest Service Depression-era administrative buildings in the Pacific Northwest. Contract Abstracts and CRM Archeology 3(2): 123-129.

1984 USDA Forest Service administrative buildings in the state [sic] of Oregon and Washington built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form. Photocopy of typescript. USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Recreation files, Mountlake Terrace.

E. Likely sources not yet investigated: USDA National Agriculture Library, Beltsville, MD (historic views)

F. Supplemental material: None.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This documentation was prepared to mitigate the effects of a rehabilitation project, as stipulated in a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement between the USDA Forest Service and the Historic American Buildings Survey, for the documentation of Depression-era administrative structures in Washington and Oregon, and dated September 25, 1986. The USDA Forest Service, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, prepared this documentation, completed January 11, 1991

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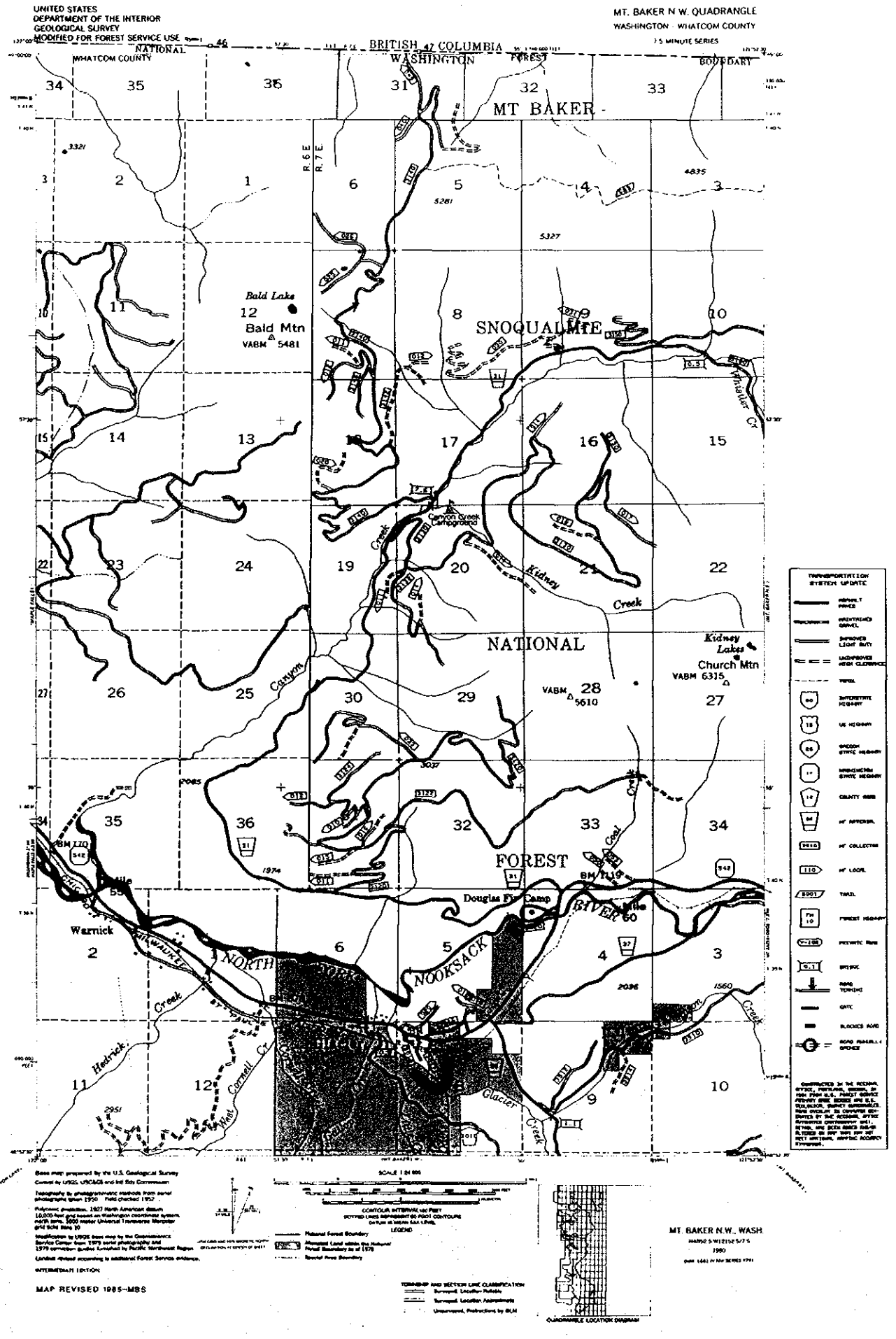
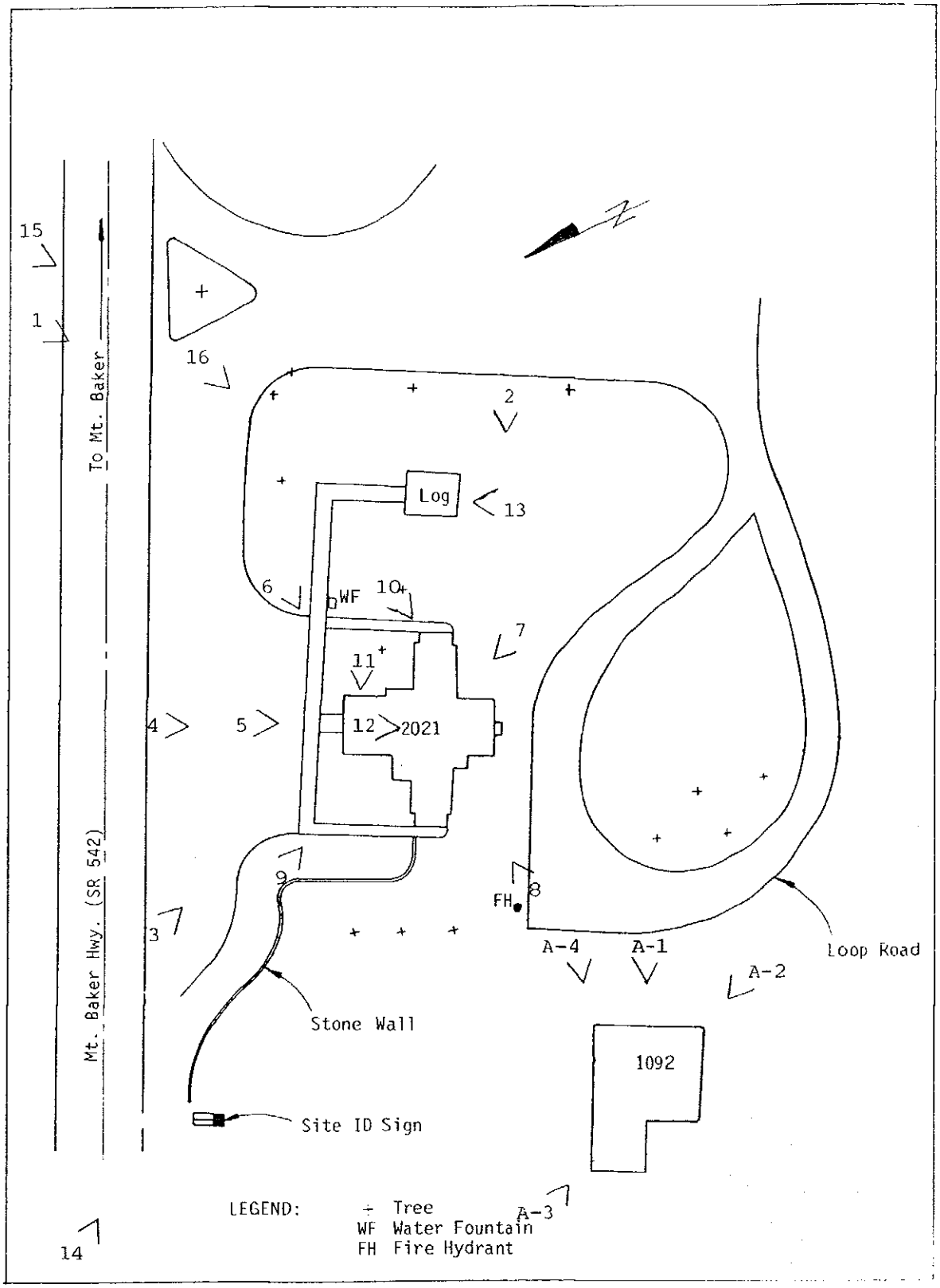
Title: Archeologist
Affiliation: Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie N. F.
Date: January 11, 1991

GLACIER RANGER STATION
HABS No. WA-192 (Page 12)
VICINITY MAP

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To Mt. Baker
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Log
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A-2
Loop Road
Stone Wall
1092
Site ID Sign
A-3
14
LEGEND:
Tree
WF Water Fountain
FH Fire Hydrant
Mt. Baker Hwy. (SR 542)